



## Section 4

# COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE: Media Tips & Tools



National Crime Victims' Rights Week provides an opportunity to intensify awareness about the challenges faced by crime victims and to highlight the long struggle to establish victims' rights. This year's theme—*New Challenges. New Solutions.*—summons our nation to confront and remove obstacles to achieving those rights. By planning a comprehensive media campaign for your NCVRW outreach, you can engage large audiences in the effort to advance crime victims' rights.

## Traditional Media

To most of us, “the media” refers to television, radio, and newspapers—or traditional journalism. Although the communications landscape has changed dramatically in recent years, these outlets continue to reach and engage significant audiences. As you plan your NCVRW strategy and messaging, you should develop and build relationships with reporters, producers, and editors so that you can reach the public and inform them about your campaign and associated events. If you don't often work with reporters, National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a great time to start. You can read local newspapers and visit local television and radio station websites to find the names of reporters who cover crime. Check by subject or topic area to locate relevant news articles or television segments. Another resource is your local library, or its website or online reference service, where you can check the most recent media resources such as *Bacon's Media Directory* (published by Cision), *BurrellesLuce*, and the *Vocus* online directory. Make a list of reporters and update it regularly.

If your agency is holding a newsworthy event, either for National Crime Victims' Rights Week or any time during the year, alert your local reporters by phone or e-mail. **Briefly** describe the event and offer yourself as a resource. Keep in mind that reporters are on tight deadlines and will want to hear about news you have to present or the human interest angle of your event. Has a local victim triumphed over tragedy or found a way to help other

victims restore their lives? Share your ideas with reporters and respond immediately if they contact you. You may become their “go-to” person when they have questions about crime in your community.

## Sample News Release

You can use the sample news release in this section as a guide to help write your own NCVRW release, or to provide a model for colleagues to use in publicizing your local events. The news release announces National Crime Victims' Rights Week, explains the theme, quotes the director of the Office for Victims of Crime, and encourages your local audience to contact your organization for information or to help observe the week. Be sure to share your releases and media advisories with colleagues and other professionals who share your mission or have partnered with you to plan NCVRW events.

Send out your NCVRW release **at least 10 days** before your event to reporters and partner organizations. Be sure to post the release on your Facebook page and tweet about it to your Twitter followers. You can use the 10-day lead time to follow up with reporters and partner organizations, find spokespeople, answer questions, and create media kits for each important event. The media kits should include your organization's contact information, names and e-mails for leadership or spokespeople, and your mission statement or description of your work.

## Public Service Announcements

Your DVD includes three professionally produced television public service announcements (PSAs) that you can use to educate your community about National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The PSAs address the topics of child sexual abuse, human trafficking and elder financial fraud. Many media outlets offer free air time for PSAs to publicize events of interest to the community. Review the PSAs

# Introduction

on your DVD, and send them to local television stations to air during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

To increase the likelihood that local television stations will air the PSAs, contact them **at least two months** before National Crime Victims' Rights Week (early February, at the latest). Talk to the news and assignment producers, explain why the week is so important, and mention that you have professionally prepared PSAs that are ready to air. When you send your script or PSA to your local television stations, include a cover letter with your contact information and the reasons why National Crime Victims' Rights Week is important for your community.

## Sample Letter to the Editor

Because newspaper editorial pages are highly popular among readers, letters to the editor are great tools for building awareness about National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Newspapers generally publish letters that respond to previous articles or news events in the community. Your letter might cite a recent article about a specific crime or crime trend. The letter can shine a spotlight on victims and stress the reasons for National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Alternatively, you might ask a local law enforcement officer or other criminal justice official to write a letter about the impact of crime on victims and cite the reasons for National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Newspapers often publish such letters as a courtesy to public officials.

## Sample Op-Ed Column

As you research your local crime reporters, you might make a list of the crimes affecting your community and the articles published in your local newspaper or broadcast in local news reports. Think about victims you know whose lives have been changed by these crimes. Have gangs preyed on teenagers in your community? Have seniors been robbed of their life savings by scam artists? Has domestic violence increased during these financially challenging times? Scan your newspaper's editorials, check out the guidelines for submitting an opinion edito-

rial, and prepare a piece that relates recent crime trends to National Crime Victims' Rights Week. You might also contact someone you know at the newspaper, explain the importance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and ask how to maximize the chances of having your op-ed published.

## New! How to Create a Social Media Campaign

Social media is increasingly used in the communications world, and offers another method of getting your messages out to a wide variety of audiences. You may want to sign up for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other such media, all of which increase your ability to reinforce your messages. Many public agencies and nonprofits have ventured into social media and are just beginning to learn the benefits of setting up accounts that can "go viral" with the click of a button. Reporters and the general public often go online to look for information and resources, and it's worth investing some time in learning how to effectively communicate this way. Whatever your organization's goals—building public awareness, reaching victims, attracting donors, or gaining members—social media can supplement your traditional media outreach and help you achieve them. This section includes some social media basics that will help you get started and guide your use of these highly effective tools.

## Sample Social Media Status Updates

This section includes status updates that you can post on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media during National Crime Victims' Rights Week and during the entire month of April. Each update is a brief point of information related to victimization, crime, or National Crime Victims' Rights Week. All Twitter updates are limited to 140 characters so that you don't need to edit them before posting. You might also want to substitute some status updates about your local NCVRW events and ask your followers to post them on their Facebook pages or retweet them for maximum publicity and community engagement.

## Other Outreach Tips

- Plan a comprehensive strategy that includes traditional media, social media, statements and letters by the public officials you have asked to speak, and a series of key messages you want your audiences to understand.
- Contact editors, producers, or station managers by phone, e-mail, or mail **two months in advance** of National Crime Victims' Rights Week.
- Ask your local officials to issue NCVRW proclamations, write letters to the editor and opinion editorials (op-eds), speak at your events, and mention National Crime Victims' Rights Week as they conduct their official duties. Thank them for their contributions, post Facebook updates and tweet about them, and publicize them in your news release and outreach materials.
- After your NCVRW events, send high-quality video or high-resolution photos or digital images to your local television stations or newspapers (with your contact information and cell phone number, if possible). If they need to fill a few minutes on their broadcasts or in their news pages, they can use your video or photos.

## New! Advocating for Victims with the Media

Communicating your message requires working effectively with reporters while advocating for victims' needs. Reporters must collect information quickly to meet deadlines, and they may not be aware of the best ways to approach crime victims. Victims who agree to speak with reporters may need information and support to handle those interviews. Victim advocates can play a key role in helping reporters get crucial information while treating victims with sensitivity. This section includes tips to help reporters and victims meet these priorities. ★



# Sample News Release

Note: The purpose of a news release is to generate media coverage of your local NCVRW events. The sample news release below begins by announcing a typical National Crime Victims' Rights Week opening ceremony. You can edit the headline and the first two paragraphs to feature what is happening in your area.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

CONTACT:

[Name/Title/Agency]

[Phone number]

[E-mail]

## [Your City] to Honor Crime Victims and Advocates at National Crime Victims' Rights Week Opening Event

[City/State]— [Your City] will open 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (April 21-27) with a ceremony honoring [name, title, and name, title]—local champions of crime victims' rights. This year's theme—*New Challenges. New Solutions.*—celebrates the spirit that will advance the progress these heroes achieved.

[The leaders honored at the opening ceremony] made remarkable progress for crime victims, despite many challenges. Only 30 years ago, crime victims had no rights, access to crime victim compensation, or services to help rebuild their lives. They were often excluded from courtrooms, treated as an afterthought by the criminal justice system, and denied an opportunity to speak at sentencing.

Yet through decades of advocacy and hard work, we have come a long way. Today, all states have enacted crime victims' rights laws and established crime victim compensation funds. More than 10,000 victim service agencies help victims throughout the nation. Every year, states and localities receive millions of federal dollars to support these services.

But National Crime Victims' Rights Week reminds us that many challenges remain. Crime victims' rights are not universal and are often not enforced. Only a small percentage of victims receive crime victim compensation, which is usually limited to victims of violent crime. According to last year's National Crime Victimization Survey, more than 50 percent of violent crimes were not reported to police in 2006-2010. In addition, a 2011 report called the *Use of Victim Services Agencies by Victims of Serious Violent Crime* showed that only 9 percent of violent crime victims received needed services in the 1993-2009 timeframe.

Advocates also face a host of new challenges as they strive to provide culturally competent services for increasingly diverse populations (e.g., seniors, teens, immigrant populations) and victims of newly prevalent crimes (e.g., trafficking and technology-related stalking and identity theft). As funding sources decrease, providers must target their services even more strategically.

"*New Challenges. New Solutions.* captures our mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," said Joye E. Frost, Acting Director, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice. "As reflected in OVC's major strategic planning initiative, *Vision 21: Transforming Victim Services*, we must craft a new vision for reaching all victims of crime. We can achieve this only by substantially broadening our thinking, strategically planning our future, and creatively expanding our resources and tools."

National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be held April 21–27 in communities throughout the nation. In Washington, DC, the U.S. Department of Justice will hold OVC's annual Service Awards ceremony that month to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime. [Your City/County/State] will also observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week with special events and programs, including [list examples and attach to the news release a summary of main events].

OVC encourages widespread participation in the week's events and in other victim-related observances throughout the year. For additional information about 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to help victims in your community, please contact [agency/organization] at [area code/telephone number], or visit [agency's website] at [website address]. For more ideas on how to volunteer to help crime victims, visit the Office for Victims of Crime website, [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov).

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[Your Organization's Mission Statement]

The NCVRW Resource Guide DVD contains three 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) for broadcast on television and posting on the Internet on the topics that are highlighted in the awareness posters: child sexual abuse, human trafficking, and elder financial fraud.

## “Child Sexual Abuse” PSA Script (30 seconds)

Child sexual abuse is hard to talk about.  
Most children won’t. So we have to.  
If you suspect a child is a victim of sexual abuse,  
find out how you can help.  
Call the 24-hour Childhelp hotline at  
1-800-4-A-CHILD.  
That’s 1-800-422-4453.

## “Human Trafficking” PSA Script (30 seconds)

Every day in America, children are trafficked for sex...  
in schools...shopping malls...truck stops...clubs, and bars.  
Think it can’t happen in your neighborhood?  
Think again.  
If you suspect a child is being trafficked for sex,  
call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center  
24-hour Hotline at 1-888-3737-888.

## “Elder Financial Fraud” PSA Script (30 seconds)

Millions of dollars are stolen every day from unsuspecting  
older adults...by family members...caregivers...and trusted  
professionals.  
If you suspect financial exploitation, call the Eldercare  
Locator at 1-800-677-1116,  
or go online to the National Adult Protective Services  
Association to be connected with help in your area.

### WHAT ARE PSAS AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

PSAs (public service announcements) are short messages given to radio or television stations to broadcast at no cost to the organization that submits them. They may be produced on film, videotape, DVD, CD, or audiotape or as a computer file.

### How Do I Get Them to Air?

First, contact your local radio or television stations to inquire about their policies on airing PSAs and their submission guidelines. Broadcast media (radio and television) are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve “in the public interest.” Most stations donate about a third of their commercial spots to non-commercial causes; in other words, if a station has 18 minutes of commercials in a given hour, six of those minutes will probably be devoted to PSAs.

Also ask who is in charge of selecting which PSAs are run. This person could be the:

- public affairs director
- traffic director
- program director
- promotions manager, or
- station manager.

Once you’ve made contact with the stations, let them know you will be sending a PSA to air. Include information about your organization in the delivery, such as a cover letter and pamphlet. Follow up five days later with a phone call to ask if the PSA was received and when it will be aired. *Continue to follow up on bi-weekly basis if you have trouble reaching the station manager. Persistence is key.*

### Community Access and Public Television

Many towns have local cable (sometimes called community access) and college stations. Locate the name of station manager and follow the same procedure as above.

### Your Website

You also may upload the PSAs to your website and use additional outreach efforts (e.g., press release, social networking status updates) to drive viewers to your site.

## Letter to the Editor

Newspapers often print letters in response to previous news items or opinion pieces. By writing a letter to the editor, you can link National Crime Victims' Rights Week to a current local, state, or national issue to show why readers should care about crime victims' rights. The following sample letter cites a news item about a homicide, explores the impact of the crime on the victim's family and community, and relates the crime to National Crime Victims' Rights Week. You may focus your letter on a specific crime or trend covered by the newspaper, or you might ask a local criminal justice official, such as your district attorney or state attorney general, to write a letter explaining the importance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week from his or her perspective.

Before writing your letter, check your newspaper's submission guidelines. Letters to the editor should be brief—no more than 250 to 300 words. Begin by citing the article to which you are responding, and then state your main point. Write two or three brief paragraphs to support your argument, and end your letter with a concluding statement. When you submit the letter, include your full contact information (name, address, e-mail address, and phone numbers) so that the newspaper can contact you if they decide to print your letter. If the newspaper does not publish your letter, you might submit it to a local organization that publishes a newsletter, or you may choose to post it on your website. You may also post links to the letter on your Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages. ★





### “Toddler’s Tragic Death” Underscores the Cost of Crime

Last week’s account of a two-year-old’s death by random gunfire, “Toddler’s Tragic Death” (03/25), highlights the cost of crime to families and communities. If a child sleeping on her grandmother’s couch can’t be safe from bullets, how can anyone in our city sleep at night?

The child (whose name was not released by police) died when a gunman sprayed her family’s home with gunfire. The killer is still at large, neighbors are still afraid to leave their homes, and the child’s family—described as “really nice people who take care of their kids”—will never be the same. Similar tragedies happened last year in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Youngstown, Ohio, and several years ago in Washington, DC.

In *Protect Children, Not Guns 2012*, the Children’s Defense Fund reported that over 116,000 children and teens in our country have died from gun violence since 1979. That is more than twice the number of U.S. military personnel killed in Vietnam and almost 20 times the number of U.S. military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan. The families and communities of these and future victims deserve our help and support.

Honoring and supporting all crime victims is the purpose of National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, which is April 21–27 this year. As our community holds its observance, we need to recall this local child’s death. We should ask how we can support this family and keep all our children safe. We should ask what rights, services, and resources are available to all victims’ and their families—and where they fall short.

And as we place this child’s name on our homicide memorial wall on April 21, let’s resolve to prevent such tragedies in the future and ensure that all our city’s crime victims get the support they deserve.

[Your Name, Title]

[Your Organization]

[Your City, State]



## What You Don't Know about Identity Theft...Can Hurt You

Last year in Philadelphia, an individual posing as billionaire Paul Allen requested a change of address on one of Allen's bank accounts. Three days later, the imposter called the bank again, claimed that he had lost his debit card, and asked to have another card sent to a new address. The caller then used the card to attempt a \$15,000 Western Union transaction, making Allen a victim of identity theft.

Allen's ordeal ended well. The bank detected the fraud and reported it to law enforcement. Allen didn't lose a dime. But many identity theft cases do not end so well.

The impact of identity theft and fraud is staggering. In 2010, more than eight million Americans had their personal data stolen for use in economic crime, according to Javelin Strategy and Research's 2011 Identity Fraud Survey Report. And in a previous two-year period, an estimated 11.7 million persons (five percent of the U.S. adult population) became victims, with a total financial impact of \$17.3 billion, according to Victims of Identity Theft 2008 by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

These statistics don't begin to tell the story of the frustration and anxiety suffered by victims of these crimes. Victims may spend days, weeks, or even years reclaiming their resources, fending off creditors, clearing their credit reports, and defending themselves from lawsuits or prosecution for crimes committed by the thieves. At least 2 in 10 respondents to a BJS survey described their victimization as "severely distressing," causing problems with their jobs, schoolwork, or relationships.

Although the most common type of identity theft involves credit card fraud, thieves are increasingly clever in the methods they use to steal identities. They often gain access to victims' telephone, utility, or insurance accounts to steal services, or find personal financial information that allows them to buy or rent houses, sell the victim's home, access job benefits, receive health care, or even identify the victim as the perpetrator of a crime committed by the thief.

Recent variations on these crimes, according to *Consumer Reports*, include "We'll Remove the Virus" online solicitations, which lure victims into authorizing the removal of a virus they do not have; the "antivirus" software then installed on victims' computers steals their passwords and personal information. Other scams include posting fraudulent Facebook surveys and "work at home" offers that trick people into supplying personal information; filing false tax returns on behalf of the victim and collecting refund checks (at a cost of \$5 billion in 2012); and stealing the Social Security numbers of children and deceased individuals to open credit card accounts, make expensive purchases, and leave unsuspecting families with the resulting debt. In one case cited by the Federal Trade Commission, a 17-year-old girl's Social Security number was used by eight different people to amass \$725,000 in debt.

The burden of preventing and recovering from identity theft falls almost entirely on consumers. However, if you have the right information, you can decrease your risk of becoming a victim. You can also increase your chances of recovering quickly if you are victimized by this type of crime.

To prevent identity theft, experts suggest buying a crosscut paper shredder and disposing of documents that include personal information; frequently checking online bank and credit card accounts for unauthorized withdrawals or charges (and frequently changing the passwords on those accounts); safeguarding Social Security numbers, birth certificates, passports, checks, and deposit slips; and regularly checking credit reports.

If you are victimized, you need to know that you have legal rights. You have the right to:

- Request free copies of your credit reports from the three credit-reporting agencies—Equifax, Experian, and Transunion—to check for newly opened accounts, loans, or other unusual activity;
- Request fraud alerts (for 90 days or extended alerts for up to seven years) on credit reports to alert lenders to verify applicants' identities before issuing credit or opening accounts;
- Freeze your credit records (in certain states), preventing creditors, insurance companies, or employers from accessing your credit reports;
- Obtain records related to identity theft cases from creditors;
- Obtain records from debt collectors (listing the original creditor and the amount of the debt);
- Dispute fraudulent records on credit reports;
- Request that the credit reporting agencies block information from their files;

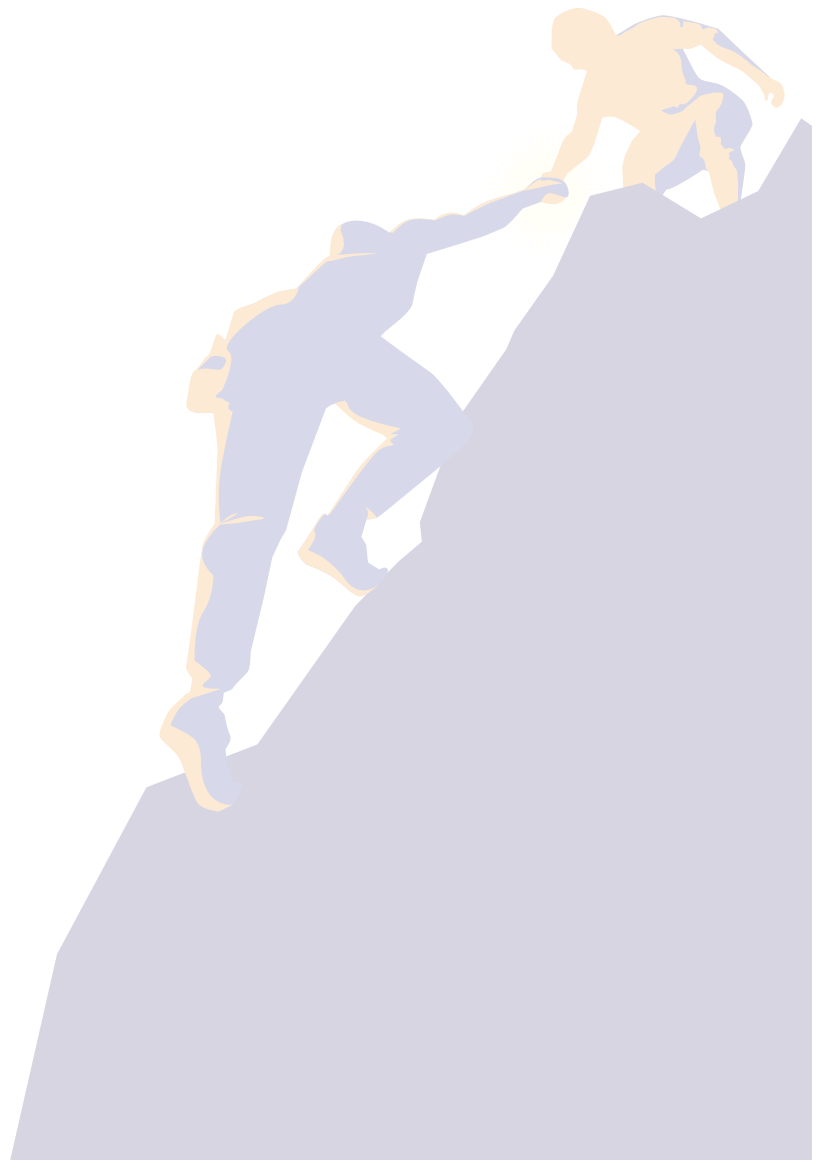


- Be free from liability (for more than \$50) for fraudulent purchases made by an identity thief, as long as the crime is reported in a timely manner. Problems exercising this right may occur, though, if you are unaware of the theft for a long period of time.

Although exercising these rights is not easy, and you may need an attorney to help, you have a much better chance of recovering quickly from identity theft if you know your rights.

Helping victims understand all their rights is the purpose of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 21 – 27, 2013. Learn more about the week, and about crime victims' rights, at [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov).

*For more information about identity theft, visit the [Federal Trade Commission](#) or the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) online.*



## New! How to Create a Social Media Campaign

Social media offers powerful tools to assist with all your outreach goals. You can use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WordPress or Blogger, LinkedIn, and several other social media forums to publicize events, share information, enlist volunteers, raise funds, and instantly reach communities that share your goals and interests. Nearly 90 percent of nonprofits now use some form of social media, making it easier for you to reach the communities you want to engage online.

Your social media strategies for National Crime Victims' Rights Week will depend on your organization's overall communications goals, the platforms you now use, your staff's knowledge, and the amount of time and resources you are able to invest in building and maintaining your online presence. Your campaign should use social media to complement rather than replace your website and traditional media outreach. You don't want to miss the advantages offered by these great tools to enhance your NCVRW outreach.

### Social Media Platforms

The building blocks of your campaign are the social media platforms now available for free or for modest fees. As you develop your strategies and identify your communications goals, you need to know the key facts about various social media, the investment they require, and the capabilities they offer to your organization. Among the most important tools are:

#### Facebook

Whatever your goals or your desired audience, you have a great chance of reaching them on Facebook. Because Facebook claims to have more than 845 million active users, you may want to start with this tool, especially if you have time to maintain only one social media platform. More than 90 percent of U.S. adult Internet users are on Facebook, according to a [2011 study by BlogHer](#); another study by Comscore shows 2011 users spent 1 of every 8

online minutes sharing content and making contacts on the site.

Facebook business pages must be linked to the personal profile of a designated individual who sets up the business or "fan" page. For instructions on how to complete that process, visit Facebook's [signup instructions page](#). Once you have signed up and established your URL (Uniform Resource Locator), you can begin posting content you want to share, visiting the Facebook pages of organizations in your field, "liking" them, and perhaps sending messages or (where allowed) posting on their Facebook pages and those of their fans (people who "like" them). You can post photos, videos, company content, invitations to upcoming events, and links back to your website. You can also join groups that are relevant to your strongest interests. To build your Facebook community, you reach out to organizations and groups you want to engage with, post on their Facebook pages if allowed, or send them messages. With some groups, you may need to send e-mails to invite them to "like" your Facebook page and become one of your fans. The resulting dialog will help support and shape your Facebook strategy.

#### Twitter

Twitter is a "microblog," an information-sharing network made up of 140-character messages called tweets. It's an easy way to discover the latest news related to subjects you care about. Twitter offers instant communication with an online community. Once you have [set up your own account](#), you should choose a Twitter handle (URL) that other "Tweeps" will recognize (often the name or nickname for your business). You can then use Twitter to establish instant connections with others in your industry or field of interest, and follow a steady stream of ideas, content, links, and resources.

Because Twitter users see themselves as a support network, it is particularly important to begin using the platform by following others and observing what they have to say. It is useful to search for the name of your organization to see what is being said about you, and search topics

and organizations that interest you. After you set up your account, you can begin following others, following their followers, retweeting their tweets, and promoting them to your audience. You will then find ways to weigh in on a conversation and promote your event, project, or policy. Learn how to use [Follow Friday \(#FF\)](#) lists that recommend others to follow you, and recruit others by posting on other platforms (like your Facebook page) that you have joined Twitter, and link back to your Twitter page. Once people start following you, you can ask to be retweeted and include in your retweet request links to your website and other social media. Be sure to respond immediately to others' tweets and mentions of your organization. You will then be on your way to promoting your organization's goals.

### YouTube

YouTube, a video platform, is the second-most visited site on the Internet, according to a [2011 Google report](#). You will need a digital camcorder, webcam, or digital camera or cell phone with video capacity, as well as someone who knows how to use those tools. To begin, set up a [YouTube channel](#) for your organization, which will be linked with any other Google accounts you have. Choose a name that matches your brand, and post your channel URL on your Facebook page and other social network profiles. You can also apply for a nonprofit-specific YouTube account, which gives you more features, such as the ability to add clickable "asks" on top of videos and upload longer videos.

If you decide to use YouTube, you might begin by posting a video about your work, featuring your staff and your success stories. You can use YouTube to upload recordings of presentations you've given, share slides from presentations, and share videos of interviews with experts or with those from your organization who can offer tips in your subject matter expertise. Post links to these videos (or the videos themselves) on your Facebook page, and tweet about them. You can engage with the YouTube community by leaving comments and even uploading video responses to the videos of other organizations. Before,

during, and after National Crime Victims' Rights Week, YouTube users post great videos on crime victims' rights, which you can post and share throughout all of your social media networks.

### Instagram

Instagram is a highly popular photo-sharing site that enables you to upload and share photos with your online network. Unlike photo archiving sites like [Flickr](#) and [Picasa](#), Instagram allows users to apply filters and other effects to give their photos special vibrancy or an aged, vintage look. Once you have [set up an Instagram account](#), you can snap photos of your NCVRW events on your mobile devices and give your followers a sneak peek before you post them on your website. You can expand the audience for your photos by "[tagging](#)" them with keywords to identify or organize them on Instagram. If someone in your organization gives an NCVRW presentation, you can take a photo and post it on Instagram and Facebook, and tweet about it on Twitter. You will have the opportunity to expand your audience and your NCVRW publicity.

### WordPress or Blogger

If you are interested in sharing more in-depth communications with your community, you may want to consider starting a blog (or weblog). [WordPress](#) and [Blogger](#) are two excellent platforms to host your blog. To maintain the interest of your audience, post at least once or twice a week, and be sure to link to your blog from your Facebook and Twitter pages, and vice versa. If you don't have time for a blog, you can always post statements and information on your website, particularly during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

### LinkedIn

You can use LinkedIn, an online professional network, to connect with any of the 3.6 million nonprofit professionals and 101,000 nonprofit organizations the site claims

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as members; the company says it has 3,000 daily users. LinkedIn offers organizations, as well as individuals, the opportunity to set up profiles and network with others, share information, ask questions, participate in discussions, and promote events and causes. LinkedIn users build a presence by inviting others to join their networks and also by joining LinkedIn groups (such as LinkedIn's "Social Media for Nonprofits" group). First, visit LinkedIn, click on "Companies," select "Add Company," and then follow the setup wizard for creating your company profile. Focus on keywords from your mission statement and whatever data you want to include. Then you can search the site for other professionals and organizations in your field, invite them to connect with you, follow them, send messages, ask questions, and join groups (searchable by name and subject area). Begin by sharing information and asking questions; be sure to learn and follow LinkedIn etiquette rules, such as always responding quickly to invitations to connect. You can update your profile regularly and arrange your settings so that your connections see each change. After several months on LinkedIn, you will be ready to share information and invite others to your NCVRW events.

### Making a Plan

Before diving into social media, meet with your staff to develop a **realistic** social media plan. You may be surprised to learn how much time is required to launch and sustain a robust social media presence. *Social Media for Social Good: A How-to Guide for Nonprofits!* says that large nonprofits with successful social media outreach average 15 hours on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; 5 hours on photograph sites; and 10 hours on their blogs each week. Although such allotments are probably unrealistic for smaller organizations, you should plan to devote at least two hours a week to Facebook, for example, if you choose that medium, and post at least twice a week.

You should also clarify your goals in using social media. What do you want to accomplish, and how will you know if you succeed? What audiences are you trying to

reach, and what do you want them to know or do? Your overall and NCVRW social media goals should be specific (e.g., reach 200 local Facebook users with NCVRW messages, invite five new groups to your NCVRW events). They should be measurable, achievable, important to your organization, and time-limited. For example, in a period of two months, you would like to gain 200 local Facebook fans for your organization and sign them up to send someone to an NCVRW event. Think about how you will follow up with these fans throughout the year. Then choose the social media tool that will best suit your goals, assign appropriate staff members to manage these media, and create a balanced social media policy for your organization. Then you can jump in!

If you decide to use social media, you should remember that these tools are two-way communications vehicles for sharing information and supporting users—not a one-way bulletin board to promote your organization. On Twitter, in particular, experts suggest tweeting or retweeting at least 10 times for every tweet devoted strictly to your organization's goals. Also, the quality of the content you post is the key to your success. Organizations with successful social media campaigns focus on providing content that is new and of value to their visitors. By posting excellent content, sharing generously, and responding quickly on all your platforms, you will build the community and the reputation you want to achieve.

**Note:** The National Center for Victims of Crime invites you to post NCVRW photos and information on our Facebook wall, [www.facebook.com/ncvcfan](http://www.facebook.com/ncvcfan), during April 2013. If you are on Twitter, please follow us at [@CrimeVictimsOrg](https://twitter.com/CrimeVictimsOrg). We are happy to retweet your messages and share information about your events or other outreach, and we encourage you to do the same. ★

Below are status updates that you can post on Facebook and Twitter throughout April 2013 to promote crime victims' rights awareness. Each status update is a brief point of information about victimization, crime, or National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The Twitter updates are all 140 characters or fewer, and ready to use. You may use these items on any date you choose, and you can also write your own status updates (see [sidebar](#)), particularly to alert your audience about your local events.

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## Facebook Status Updates

Below is a list of status updates to use as Facebook posts. In your posts, you can also include related photos or graphics (e.g., the 2013 NCVRW logo), as well as your fans' responses.

- National Crime Victims' Rights Week begins April 21. Visit [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov) for more information about resources and events.
- Find ways to interact and network during National Crime Victims' Rights Week in your community at [www.navaa.org/cap/previous.html](http://www.navaa.org/cap/previous.html).
- For directories of local resources for victims nationwide, visit the [Directory of Crime Victim Services](#) at the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, and the [Connect Directory](#) at the National Center for Victims of Crime.
- Share photos and announcements about your NCVRW planning and events at [www.facebook.com/ncvcfan](http://www.facebook.com/ncvcfan). The National Center will share your posts on Facebook and their other social media outreach throughout April.
- Looking for resources for crime victims with disabilities? Visit the [Resource Directory for Service Providers](#).
- Check out the theme video for your New Challenges, New Solutions NCVRW event. You can download the 2013 video at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw>.
- Looking for tools and resources to help victims and providers understand forensic DNA? Visit the [DNA Resource Center](#) at the National Center for Victims of Crime.
- For information about how to recognize the signs that someone may be a victim of human trafficking, visit the [Polaris Project](#).
- Learn more about how to protect yourself from identity theft at the [Federal Trade Commission](#) website.
- Do you know the warning signs of child sexual abuse and how adults can help? Find out more at [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org).
- If you think an older person is being financially abused, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, and they will refer you to an agency in your area.
- April 16-18 in the National Criminal Justice Training Center will hold the [Crimes Against Children in Indian Country](#) conference in Carleton, Minnesota.
- Looking for information on crime victim compensation in your state? Visit the [National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards](#) directory of state programs.
- For information about victims of assault, domestic violence, stalking, child abuse, sexual assault, and other crimes, download the [Help Series brochures](#)

# Sample Social Media Status Updates

from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Twitter Status Updates

Below is a list of suggested tweets for you to share with your followers:

- National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 21-27. Stay connected by using #NCVRW2013 in your searches.<sup>1</sup>
- Want to receive a free copy of #NCVRW2013 Resource Guide? Sign up here: <http://1.usa.gov/bJ3d6u>.
- Today marks the start of 2013 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, New Challenges. New Solutions. Visit [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013).
- Looking for ways to observe #NCVRW2013 in your community? Find ways to interact and network. <http://www.navaa.org/cap>.
- The entire #NCVRW2013 Resource Guide is now downloadable at no charge at [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013).
- Free awareness posters are available! <http://1.usa.gov/NY9ARf> #NCVRW2013
- April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month (#NSAAM2013). #Follow @NSVRC for more info. [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org).
- For #crime #victim statistics and talking points, visit <http://bit.ly/ODy65P> #NCVRW2013.

<sup>1</sup> Twitter users can use the hashtag sign (#) in their Twitter searches. Hashtags tie the conversations of different Twitter users into streams of tweets. You can find these streams by placing a hashtag followed by a keyword into the search window. For example, you might find tweets about crime victims by placing #crimevictims in your search window. Searching by the above example #NCVRW2013 would help you find a stream of tweets about National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2013.

## MORE TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

In addition to Facebook and Twitter status updates, you can use the following ideas to generate more NCVRW posts on your social media sites.

- Download NCVRW theme artwork from the Resource Guide CD-ROM or the [Office for Victims of Crime](http://www.ovc.gov) website. (The most popular Facebook posts include photos and graphics.)
- Post photos or videos of your organization's NCVRW planning or events.
- Post photos of your NCVRW event speakers on your Facebook page (in advance of the events), and promote them on Twitter and your other social media.
- Download the app for [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/), a photo-editing platform for iPhone or Android users that converts your photos to clear, small images and allows you to add filters to those images. Instagram interfaces with Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms.
- Upload posters from the [Office for Victims of Crime](http://www.ovc.gov) [gallery of awareness posters](http://www.ovc.gov) crime- and victim-related topics.
- Post links to NCVRW op-eds or news releases in your local newspaper or television station website.
- Post links to the NCVRW statements or proclamations of your local or state officials (and include brief blurbs about these statements).
- Allow other Facebook users to post stories, event reminders, pictures, and updates on your wall. (Change your Facebook settings to "open settings," and be sure to monitor your wall every day for negative or offensive posts).
- Check the Facebook pages of 2013 NCVRW partners (see "Additional Resources" in Section 7 of the NCVRW Resource Guide) and "like" these partners or link to them.
- Ask your Facebook fans and Twitter followers to post your status updates on their social media networks.
- Post current and recent NCVRW videos from [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/).



## Sample Social Media Status Updates

- New for #NCVRW2013: download public service announcements for your organization! [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013)
- Knowing how #victims react to #trauma is key to providing aid. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/NPw7gM>.
- Learn about the official partners for National Crime Victims' Rights Week in Section 7 of the Resource Guide. [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013)
- Are you a #victim of crime? Do you know someone who is? Find useful information in the #NCVRW2013 Resource Guide at [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013).
- Need a video for your #NCVRW2013 event? Download the theme video at [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013).
- Want to know more about protecting yourself from fraud? Follow the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau @ConsumerFinance.gov #NCVRW2013
- Interested in the Crime Victim Compensation program in your state? #NCVRW2013 <http://bit.ly/P9S1L5>
- Find a beautiful tribute to #victims and their stories @CollinsCACenter #NCVRW2013 <http://bit.ly/QJvS4j>
- Need the perfect quote for a #NCVRW2013 event? Read the #victim-centered quotes in Section 2 of the Resource Guide. [www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013](http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw2013)
- Don't miss the 2013 National Conference with @CrimeVictimsOrg. Follow for live updates, [www.victimsofcrime.org](http://www.victimsofcrime.org).
- Do you know the warning signs of #childsexualabuse? Find information here: <http://bit.ly/SB6IRJ> #NCVRW2013.
- Stalking is a crime, not a joke. Visit <http://bit.ly/OgKNVa> for more on stalking laws @SRC\_NCVC. #NCVRW2013 #NSAM.
- How much do you know about stalking? Test your knowledge at <http://bit.ly/4T7rOo>. #NCVRW2013 #NSAM.
- An extensive, searchable database of federal, state, and tribal #victim laws is available at [www.victimlaw.info](http://www.victimlaw.info). #NCVRW2013.
- Learn about community #victim assistance-related events or add your own conference or training opportunity. Visit <http://bit.ly/tKEx4B>.
- Are you looking for information regarding DNA and crime #victims? Follow @DNA\_Answers and visit <http://bit.ly/S7OET4> #NCVRW2013. ★



## New! Advocating for Victims with the Media

Media coverage of crime greatly influences public perceptions about victims. Particularly in the immediate aftermath of crimes, as reporters rush to meet deadlines, their reporting may not reflect the desired sensitivity to traumatized victims. Because many television and print reporters do not receive training in how to interact with victims, you have an opportunity to help them approach crime stories with sensitivity. As a victim advocate who understands the perspective of victims and knows what reporters need to write their stories, you can play a key role in advocating for victim-sensitive coverage of crime.

### Tips for Reporters

In writing news stories about crime, reporters have the difficult task of seeking interviews from victims and conducting those interviews in an ethical manner when victims agree to speak. Advocates can help reporters prepare to speak with victims by offering suggestions about how to approach the victim so that he or she feels comfortable and safe. If reporters are open to some tips for approaching crime victims, you can share the following guidelines<sup>2</sup> about how reporters should handle interviews.

### Asking for the Interview

- Recognize that the victim may be coping with shock and trauma;
- Approach the victim without equipment—notebooks, tape recorders, cameras, and lights—and try to make a human connection;
- Introduce yourself as a reporter, give the victim your name and title, and briefly explain what you hope to achieve with your story;

- Express concern for the victim by saying “I am sorry for what happened to you” or “I am sorry for your loss”;
- Ask victims how they would prefer to be addressed, and observe that preference in all your questions;
- Give the victim a reason to speak with you by explaining the purpose of the story, the fact that it will be published, and why the victim’s participation is important;
- Tell the victim how much time you need and observe that time limit;
- Courteously accept the victim’s refusal if he or she is unwilling to be interviewed;
- If the victim says no, express interest in a future interview, leave a business card, and ask for the names of others who may be willing to speak.

### Logistics and Other Considerations

- Make the victim comfortable—offer a chair or suggest a comfortable, safe place to talk;
- Respect victims’ space—because people in trauma often do not want to be touched, hand the lavalier microphone to the victim and explain how to adjust it;
- Ask permission to record the interview;
- Clarify ground rules—explain that anything victims say may be used in the interview; give victims permission to turn off the microphone if they want to say something they do not want included.

### Victim Advocacy during Interviews

With the help of victim advocates, reporters can approach the interview with sensitivity toward the victim and the understanding that he or she may be undergoing trauma associated with the crime. Advocates who are present

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<sup>2</sup> Bonnie Bucqueroux and Anne Seymour, *A Guide for Journalists Who Report on Crime and Crime Victims*, (Washington, DC: Justice Solutions, 2009), 2-10, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.mediacrimevictimguide.com/journalistguide.pdf>.

during the interview can step in if the reporter's questions become too pointed or difficult or if the victim seems to be getting upset. By making victims' needs a priority, advocates can keep the interview on track and encourage the reporter to do so as well.

### Tips for Victims

Advocating for victims with the media also includes helping victims decide whether to accept interviews, how to minimize invasions of their privacy, and how to exercise their rights and options in dealing with reporters. Advocates can also help victims anticipate questions and prepare how to answer them.

### Before the Interview

By giving victims the following checklist of questions and walking through it with them, you can help victims decide whether to participate in an interview:

**1. What are your goals in speaking to the media?**

What purpose do you hope the interview will serve? Will it help the community know more about your loved one or understand the impact of crime on victims? Are you willing to answer questions from reporters who might not understand your pain or your point of view?

**2. Would the interview invade your privacy?** If you are still struggling with the emotional, physical, or financial impact of the crime, would speaking to a reporter disturb you or make you feel violated? You may want to discuss the pros and cons with a victim advocate before making your decision.

**3. Does refusing the interview increase your control over what is published about the crime?** Denying an interview will not prevent publicity about your case. If the story is newsworthy, the media will publish the story with or without interviewing you. Also, an interview may provide you with an opportunity to offer your perspective on the crime.

**4. Would you prefer that someone else speak for you?** If you would rather not be interviewed, you may ask someone else—an attorney, victim advocate, clergy member, or friend—to represent you in media interviews. That person can also release written statements on your behalf or accompany you to interviews if you decide to accept them.

**5. Would granting an interview affect the investigation or prosecution of the crime?** Giving an interview may compromise the investigation or prosecution of a crime. You may want to speak with an advocate or attorney before deciding to grant an interview.

**6. Do you want to set conditions for the interview?** Although reporters and producers may not agree to the conditions you suggest, you have the right to ask or express your wishes about:

- Time and location of the interview
- Visiting the set or location before an interview
- Advance information about questions, the reporter's angle, or plans for using your interview
- Issues you will not discuss
- Requesting a specific reporter
- Protecting your identity (through silhouettes and electronic distortion of your voice)
- Excluding children and other family members from the interview
- Excluding photos and other images you find offensive
- Excluding offenders or other participants you might object to.

### Preparing Victims for the Interview

You can share the following tips with victims who decide to agree to interviews:

## New! Advocating for Victims with the Media

1. You may bring someone to provide support.
2. You may prepare for the interview by having an advocate list questions the reporter may ask and rehearsing responses.
3. You may refuse to answer a question by:
  - Polite refusal: Saying, “I’m sorry, but I don’t want to talk about that.”
  - Bridging: Change the subject to what YOU want to talk about. Answer by saying, “what is really important about that issue is...” and then talk about what you think the audience should know.
4. Never speak “off the record.” Reporters may publish or broadcast anything you say.
5. If you don’t know the answer to a question, simply say you don’t know. Don’t guess or speculate.
6. You may request a correction if the article that is published is inaccurate or you are quoted out of context. Newspapers may publish corrections and television news may correct serious errors (although the option to do so is theirs).
7. You may refuse a follow-up interview, even if you have previously agreed to be interviewed a second time.

Victim advocates can play a key role in mediating between reporters and victims. By helping both reporters and victims accomplish their mutual goals, advocates can help produce more effective media coverage and victim-centered reporting both during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and throughout the year. ★

